

SUSTAINABLE TREE CROPS PROGRAMME IN AFRICA

Alternatives to Slash-and-Burn – World Agroforestry Centre

International Institute of Tropical Agriculture

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Summary of the aims and objectives and the economic, environmental and social sustainability goals

Based on ASB science, the Sustainable Tree Crops Program (STCP) is a unique collaborative effort aimed at improving both the environment and the social and economic well-being of smallholder tree crop farmers in West and Central Africa. Through STCP the international cocoa industry has joined forces with farmer organizations and researchers to create a ground-breaking public-private partnership. The objective of STCP is to stabilize and sustain rural communities and environments in Africa, reducing poverty and enabling smallholder farmers to remain on the land. The current programme focuses on the small, independent cocoa farmers across Ivory Coast, Ghana, Nigeria and Cameroon – producers of close to 70% of the world's cocoa. The programme is implemented by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), a leading ASB partner.

STCP partners have agreed to address three common concerns:

- Promoting the production and marketing of high quality cocoa;
- Improving market access and income for small-scale cocoa producers; and
- Creating production systems that are environmentally friendly, socially responsible, and economically sustainable.

STCP's Farmer Field Schools, a participatory training approach that STCP adapted to cocoa systems in Africa, have succeeded beyond all expectations and are now the flagship activity of the programme. In these schools, farmers learn how to boost their incomes by increasing yields and quality, while protecting cocoa's natural resource base. As with coffee, cocoa is often cultivated with other plant and animal life, and this in turn offers opportunities for farm-level diversification. Farmer Field Schools teach farmers about shade management, tree husbandry, and post harvest handling, and will soon include crop diversification, natural fertilization, and other best practices. STCP has also integrated selected social messages (primarily on child labour, HIV/AIDS, the importance of children's education, and the role of children on the family farm) into its Farmer Field School curriculum.

Summary of the impact achieved

STCP's goal is to improve the economic and social well-being of smallholders and the environmental sustainability of tree crop farms. This approach builds on existing efforts and activities of relevant stakeholder groups to add value and enhance future collaboration.

Over the last 3 years, STCP partners raised over US\$4 million from public sources (primarily from USAID, but also from the UK Department for International Development, the Canadian International Development Agency and the Danish International Development Agency, while

leveraging more than US\$4 million from the private sector (primarily through the World Cocoa Foundation, Mars Incorporated (Masterfoods), and the Ivorian *Fonds de Développement et de Promotion des Activités des Producteurs de Café et de Cacao* (a national cocoa fund).

These resources have been used to achieve a number of significant impacts to date:

- Farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing following training is significant. In Cameroon, 77% of Farmer Field School participants informally trained other farmers through on-farm demonstrations – a much higher diffusion rate than generally expected. In addition, Farmer Field School graduates work in groups more frequently, speak in public more confidently, and feel more empowered.
- Farmer Field Schools have improved management skills of over 13,000 farmers in three years. An additional 26,000 farmers benefited through assisted farmer-to-farmer knowledge sharing. In fields of trained farmers, cocoa yields average 15-40% higher, while requiring 10-20% less pesticide.
- STCP is strengthening 15 farmer cooperatives through training and technical support, reaching over 31,000 farmers directly in four cocoa-growing countries. Through group sales, and more transparent and direct transactions, farmers receive 5-15% higher prices.
- The increase in household cocoa income in 2004, a combined result of production and marketing interventions, averaged 23-55% higher than in non-programme households.
- STCP provides a platform for regional collaboration on research to address the genetic basis for improved cocoa plants, pest and disease management, and the diversification of cocoa farms. At the same time, local research capacity is developed across the region.
- Having earned the attention and respect of farmers throughout its operating areas, STCP is also successfully integrating social messaging on HIV/AIDS and the prevention of hazardous child labour into the technical agenda. For example, in Ghana, for every 1,000 farmers sensitised to child labour issues through the farmer field school curriculum, over 200 children are voluntarily removed from dangerous farm work.
- STCP research has shown the potential of cocoa agro-forests for minimizing trade-offs between the environment and development. In Cameroon, 255 plant species were identified as foods, medicinal plants, aphrodisiacs, and service products. This biodiversity generates income for women, which accounts for approximately 20% of the total gross revenue from the cocoa farm. These are living models for cocoa systems of the future.
- Sustainable cocoa farming in West Africa “not only secures the supply chain for the long term, but also protects the livelihood of more than 1.5 million cocoa farmers in the region.” says John Lunde, director of international programmes at Mars Incorporated (See: [USAID Frontlines](#)).

Innovative elements of STCP

We believe STCP is emerging as a prime example of the especially high potential vested in public-private partnerships, smallholder farmer initiatives and the mixed cultivation of cash and export food crops. It also provides a rare example of successful regional collaboration, well-coordinated multilateral donor support and proactive private sector input.

But others have answered this question as well as or better than we can:

“STCP’s most important accomplishment and innovation is the public/private partnership with its holistic approach to address complex challenges and issues that is its *raison d’être*, and from which all stakeholders derive value. This unique partnership has never before existed for the cocoa sector, which is the most important tree-based commodity in West Africa.” (STCP External Review, February 2005).

“An important achievement of STCP is its success in building an industry coalition committed to improving the circumstances of cocoa producers. Clearly, a consensus exists that the future of the chocolate business depends on the future of rural families growing the cocoa.” Jeff Hill, senior agricultural advisor for USAID’s Office of Sustainable Development for Africa.

“The chocolate industry, through the World Cocoa Foundation, is pleased to support the Sustainable Tree Crops Program. This public-private sector partnership is helping to improve productivity, incomes, marketing skills, environmental and social conditions for thousands of small scale cocoa farmers in West Africa.” Bill Guyton, President, World Cocoa Foundation, 2006.

“Through this unique public/private partnership, we have made incredible advances in cacao research and economic development for farmers in tropical regions that would not have been possible without the willingness of industry, academia, government and international organizations to come together for the greater good.” Carol Brookins, U.S. Executive Director to the World Bank (Global Development Alliance Report, 2006).

Summary of total revenues/resources and investment deployed relative to the scale and extent of the outcome

The demand for chocolate drives what is now a US\$60 billion global industry. West Africa provides 70% of world cocoa exports, worth nearly US\$2 billion. In addition to the US\$8 million mentioned above, the chocolate and cocoa industries have put their expertise at the disposal of the STCP. They are providing field-level expertise to support Farmer Field Schools (e.g., through Mars Inc.), as well as expertise on in-country marketing to improve the margins of cocoa cooperatives (e.g., through Archer Daniels Midland). The Canadian NGO "SOCODEVI," CABI Bioscience, and "Forest and Landscape Denmark" have co-financed experts in strengthening farmer organizations, use of participatory tools, and agroforestry, respectively. National research institutions in Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire have made their scientists available as resource people in training curriculum development and in the conduct of training programmes. These contributions are difficult to measure but are invaluable in bringing the necessary mix of experience and expertise to bear on the challenges being address by the STCP.

Most of STCP’s financial resources have been managed using the international accounting practices and auditing standards of IITA. The allocation of resources is based on input to and review of work plans at national and regional levels. The STCP established a national network of key tree crop stakeholders across the supply chain in each country to assist in this process. A regional steering committee with representation from the cocoa industry, key donors, and the chairs of the national networks reviews the overall programmatic balance and the results.

Monitored, measured and evaluating success

STCP is managed by an extremely capable and highly committed group of individuals at the national and regional levels. Together, they provide a wealth of technical and institutional knowledge and constitute one of STCP's core assets.

A regional programme management structure has been developed to support and link the pilot projects and regional activities. The STCP regional programme is managed through the STCP Regional Office and its associated National Coordination Units. The STCP Regional Office includes a programme manager, a regional technical team, and support staff, and is hosted by IITA's Humid Forest Ecoregional Centre in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The STCP Steering Committee, consisting of 15 members from farmers' groups, industry/trade, funding agencies, national network chairs and the programme host institution provides general oversight to the STCP programme. A Donor Alliance Committee ensures a broad-based public-private partnership to support the STCP efforts.

Objectives and targets are set based on close consultation with the National Networks and the Regional Steering Committee. The members provide insight and experience across the whole supply chain and include public as well as private partners.

STCP has an active impact assessment subprogramme, and the STCP Donor Alliance Committee commissioned an external review that was completed in February 2005. An underlying principle of the STCP's monitoring and evaluation efforts is that all knowledge and lessons derived from the Programme's activities belong in the public domain and should be made readily available to all practitioners. STCP is taking active steps to ensure that such information is broadly available. Communications are occurring through at least five different channels, ranging from articles for the popular press to scientific publications. In addition, STCP is actively involved in training local institutions/organizations to allow for a scaling up of lessons learned.

Summary of partners and stakeholders

In 1998, a critical mass of stakeholders formed around concerns about the cocoa supply chain. An industry-supported conference organized by the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institution in Panama convened some 200 government and industry leaders to discuss ways to strengthen cocoa production. Following the conference, a high-level industry delegation visited West Africa to gain a better understanding of production conditions. The delegation presented its findings at a series of global stakeholder meetings resulting in the 1999 "Paris Declaration" in which the chocolate industry, donor agencies, trade organizations, producer groups, and major research institutions made a commitment to sustainable cocoa production. STCP evolved from that declaration.

STCP is a public-private partnership to improve the environment and the social and economic well-being of smallholder tree crop farmers in West and Central Africa. The STCP programme partners comprise:

- 20 national farmer organizations
- 11 African private companies
- 18 ministries of agriculture, commerce, labour, and other public agencies
- 11 national and international NGOs
- 21 national and international research institutes
- 38 international industry and trade organizations
- 8 international development agencies
- 7 others, including the International Labour Organization, Cocoa Producers Alliance, and International Cocoa Organization country projects.

Its private-sector partners provide a variety of assets, including market intelligence, specific knowledge of the industry, and the skills and experience needed to design and implement market-focused activities. Public-sector partners bring deeper understanding of the countries in which the partnership is working, knowledge of development, and networks of expertise. Farmer organizations ensure that growers' needs are addressed.